



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

## FOR WESTERN WISCONSIN COUNTIES

BUFFALO, CRAWFORD, JACKSON, JUNEAU, LA CROSSE, MONROE, TREMPLEAU, & VERNON

May 2004

### No Rain on April's local unemployment numbers

Spring was in the air in April and April showers didn't rain on the parade of lower unemployment rates in Western Wisconsin. The number of jobholders in Western Wisconsin increased from 148,500 in March to 151,300 April. The increase in employment helped reduce the regional unemployment rate from 6.4 to 4.1 percent. Unadjusted unemployment rates declined in all eight counties in the Western region as they did in all but two counties statewide.

The State of Wisconsin unadjusted unemployment rate dropped from 6.2 to 5.1 percent in April while the

number of employed residents in the MSA increased by 400 in April as the number of unemployed declined by 600. These changes brought total employment in April 2004 to 74,100.

Seasonally adjusted the Wisconsin unemployment rate in April was 4.6 percent and the national rate was 5.6 percent, down 1.1 percent and 0.4 percentage points from a year ago, respectfully.

In the La Crosse metro area, as in most counties in the state, the reduction in the number of unemployed was greater than the in-

#### National Reports

Nationally, utilities across the United States have sent cancellation notices to thousands of homeowners who are behind on their electricity and natural gas heating bills. The number of shut-offs is on course to be much higher than last year in many parts of the country. Moratoriums that bar utilities from cutting off heating mid-winter in many states are over in April. Expensive energy costs, combined with a fragile economy that left people unemployed or underemployed during the winter, led more households to go delinquent and not pay their heating bills this year than in prior years, according to reports from the utilities.

Wholesale prices shot up by 0.7 percent in April, the largest increase in a year, propelled by higher gasoline costs and the biggest jump in dairy product prices since 1946. This increase followed a 0.5 percent rise in March and a 0.1 percent gain in February. April prices for finished goods other than foods and energy went up 0.2 percent, the same rate of increase as in the previous month. At the earlier stages of processing, the intermediate goods index climbed 1.4 percent, compared with a 0.7 percent gain in March.

Separately, the Commerce Department reported that sales at the nation's retailers dropped by 0.5 percent in April, following a strong 2 percent rise in March. April's performance was bogged down by sharp drop in automobile sales.

Labor Force Estimates (Seasonally Adjusted)			
	La Crosse * MSA	Wisconsin (000s)	United States (000s)
<b>Current month: April 2004</b>			
Civilian Labor Force	76,800	3,101.7	146,741
Employment	74,100	2,957.8	138,576
Unemployment	2,700	143.9	8,164
Unemployment rate	3.6%	4.6%	5.6%
<b>Change from one month ago</b>			
Civilian Labor Force	-200	-8.2	91
Employment	400	6.7	278
Unemployment	-600	-15.0	(188)
Unemployment rate	-0.7%	-0.5%	-0.1%
<b>Change from one year ago</b>			
Civilian Labor Force	2,600	30.1	364
Employment	3,300	62.5	998
Unemployment	-700	-32.5	(635)
Unemployment rate	-1.0%	-1.1%	-0.4%

Note: All estimates are preliminary and based on place of residence.

\* La Crosse MSA Statistics include Houston County Minnesota

national unadjusted rate declined from 6.0 to 5.4 percent.

The seasonally unemployment rate for the La Crosse metropolitan statistical area (MSA) declined from 4.3 percent in March to 3.6 percent in April and is down one percent from the 4.6 percent one year ago. It is the lowest seasonally adjusted April unemployment rate for the La Crosse MSA since 2001. The num-

crease in employed. In the Western region the number of unemployed declined by 3,300 but employment increased only 2,800. It is fairly typical for the labor force to decline in April but the reduction this year is much larger than normal. The seasonal changes in the labor force reflect not only the number of available jobs but also the perceived potential for work.

# Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Area

April 2004	Buffalo	Crawford	Jackson	Juneau	Lacrosse	Monroe	Trempealeau	Vernon	Region	Non MSA*	Wisconsin
<b>Civilian Labor Force**</b>	7,560	9,950	12,150	10,820	65,150	22,340	15,430	14,770	158,160	93,010	3,082,940
Employed	7,230	9,410	11,630	9,940	62,930	21,430	14,660	14,100	151,330	88,400	2,925,250
Unemployed	330	530	520	880	2,220	910	770	660	6,830	4,610	157,700
Unemployment Rate	4.4%	5.3%	4.3%	8.2%	3.4%	4.1%	5.0%	4.5%	4.3%	5.0%	5.1%
<b>Total Nonfarm (NFWS) ***</b>	5,200	7,300	8,500	8,900	69,700	19,000	12,800	8,500	139,800	70,100	2,799,700
Total Private	4,300	6,200	5,500	6,500	60,200	14,600	10,600	6,300	114,100	53,800	2,378,700
Goods Producing	400	1,800	1,800	2,300	11,600	3,900	5,200	1,100	28,100	16,500	627,600
Service Producing	4,700	5,600	6,700	6,600	58,100	15,100	7,600	7,400	111,700	53,600	2,172,100
Constr., Mining & Nat.Rsrcs	160	220	900	270	2,400	480	210	240	4,900	2,500	125,000
Manufacturing	300	1,500	900	2,100	9,200	3,400	5,000	800	23,200	14,000	502,600
Trade	500	1,800	900	1,100	11,700	2,700	1,400	1,700	21,700	10,000	434,900
Transportation & Utilities	2,000	200	700	300	2,100	1,800	500	300	7,900	5,800	319,000
Financial Activities	160	180	240	240	3,400	560	480	360	5,600	2,200	158,600
Education and Health Services	500	1,000	700	1,200	13,500	1,600	1,100	1,600	21,200	7,700	375,000
Leisure & Hospitality	400	800	800	700	6,900	1,700	700	600	12,700	5,800	243,200
Info., Prof. & Bus. Svcs, Other Svcs	300	500	300	600	11,100	2,400	1,100	600	16,900	5,900	434,100
Total Government	890	1,160	2,970	2,430	9,450	4,440	2,190	2,220	25,700	16,300	421,000
Federal	110	70	60	270	540	2,110	130	120	3,400	2,860	29,200
State	20	200	440	730	2,610	240	30	30	4,280	1,670	101,500
Local	770	890	2,480	1,440	6,300	2,090	2,030	2,080	18,060	11,760	290,300
<b>Change from one month ago</b>	<b>March 2004</b>										
<b>Civilian Labor Force**</b>	-270	-120	220	-80	-100	-40	10	-80	-400	-400	-9,400
Employed	-60	130	490	230	1,000	280	530	280	2,800	1,900	24,300
Unemployed	-210	-250	-270	-310	-1,000	-320	-520	-360	-3,300	-2,200	-33,700
Unemployment rate(%)	-2.5	-2.4	-2.3	-2.8	-1.6	-1.4	-3.3	-2.4	-2.1	-2.4	-1.1
<b>Total Nonfarm (NFWS) ***</b>	100	90	370	220	1,400	270	550	130	3,200	1,700	39,600
Percent change NFWS from last month	2.0%	1.2%	4.6%	2.5%	2.1%	1.4%	4.5%	1.6%	2.3%	2.5%	1.4%
Total Private	50	90	300	100	1,400	200	560	100	2,900	1,500	37,000
Goods Producing	10	80	300	0	400	0	410	30	1,200	800	12,100
Service Producing	100	10	100	200	1,100	200	150	110	2,000	900	27,500
Constr., Mining & Nat.Rsrcs	10	30	260	30	200	50	50	30	600	500	8,400
Manufacturing	0	60	0	0	200	-20	360	0	600	400	3,700
Trade	10	-30	0	0	200	30	50	30	300	100	5,400
Transportation & Utilities	-10	10	0	10	0	-120	0	10	-100	-100	3,900
Financial Activities	0	0	0	0	100	0	10	0	100	0	-500
Education and Health Services	10	-10	0	0	200	10	-10	10	200	0	800
Leisure & Hospitality	30	50	50	100	200	190	60	30	700	500	8,500
Svcs	10	-10	10	0	400	60	40	0	500	100	10,100
Total Government	50	0	30	90	0	70	-10	30	300	300	2,600
Federal	10	0	0	-10	0	20	-10	0	0	0	0
State	0	10	30	30	90	0	0	0	200	100	1,600
Local	40	-10	0	60	-90	50	-10	30	100	200	1,000
<b>Change from one year ago</b>	<b>April 2003</b>										
<b>Civilian Labor Force**</b>	-140	60	110	40	2,300	930	580	170	4,000	1,800	29,300
Employed	-50	270	290	290	2,900	1,120	900	420	6,100	3,200	61,100
Unemployed	-90	-210	-180	-250	-600	-190	-320	-240	-2,100	-1,500	-31,900
Unemployment rate(%)	-1.1	-2.1	-1.5	-2.3	-1.0	-1.0	-2.3	-1.7	-1.5	-1.7	-1.1
<b>Total Nonfarm (NFWS) ***</b>	-20	80	90	140	2,300	710	690	20	4,000	1,700	38,100
Percent change NFWS from last year	-0.4%	1.2%	1.0%	1.6%	3.4%	3.9%	5.7%	0.2%	2.9%	2.5%	1.4%
Total Private	40	90	0	0	2,100	700	600	100	3,600	1,500	45,700
Goods Producing	10	20	100	-100	500	-100	400	0	800	300	4,100
Service Producing	-30	60	0	300	1,800	800	300	0	3,200	1,400	34,000
Constr., Mining & Nat.Rsrcs	10	10	60	10	100	10	0	0	200	100	5,400
Manufacturing	0	20	0	-200	400	-100	440	0	600	200	-1,300
Trade	-10	30	0	0	0	160	40	80	300	300	11,700
Transportation & Utilities	20	0	0	20	0	130	0	0	100	100	8,100
Financial Activities	0	0	10	10	100	0	50	0	200	100	2,700
Education and Health Services	-20	10	0	100	800	30	10	60	1,000	200	10,700
Leisure & Hospitality	40	40	0	0	100	80	40	0	300	300	7,500
Svcs	0	-20	-100	0	700	350	50	-30	1,000	300	9,000
Total Government	-60	-10	40	170	180	60	70	-110	300	200	-7,600
Federal	-60	0	0	20	0	40	0	-10	0	0	-500
State	-10	0	-20	150	0	-10	0	0	100	100	-4,100
Local	10	-10	50	0	180	30	80	-100	200	100	-3,000

\* Seven counties, excluding La Crosse County \*\* Includes participants residing in area. \*\*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted.

Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers. NFWS data is benchmarked to 3/2002

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